



Department of Justice

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PASCO COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO 60 YEARS FOR PRODUCTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Tampa, FL - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that U.S. District Judge James D. Whittemore yesterday sentenced Kenneth Blage (age 42, of Zephyrhills) to 60 years in federal prison for producing child pornography. Blage had pleaded guilty on May 26, 2010.

According to court documents, in April of 2009, law enforcement received information that Blage was engaging in sexual activity with a fifteen-year-old girl (Victim 1) and a thirteen-year-old girl (Victim 2). Authorities contacted Blage to inquire about the allegations. Blage told them that he was the children's caretaker and had never had inappropriate contact with either child. Blage further explained that he was attempting legally to adopt Victim 2.

In July 2009, Blage's roommate brought authorities a computer hard drive, two CDs, and two memory cards that Blage asked him to destroy. The roommate stated that Blage had given him the materials on the day the investigation into the abuse began. Officers reviewed the images on the CDs and discovered numerous explicit sexual photos of Victim 1. Analysis of the memory stick revealed pornographic images of Victim 2.

Further investigation revealed that 664 images were taken of Victim 1 and 501

images and one video of Victim 2. Victim 2 and several of her family members had moved in with Blage due to financial hardship. Blage had sexually abused Victim 2 from December of 2008 until August of 2009 and had taken hundreds of photos of her. He also had physically abused Victim 2 in other ways, burning the child's neck with a cigarette, throwing a frying pan at her, and drawing blood by slapping her face.

United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton stated: "I want to commend the state investigators who worked with our office to bring this defendant to justice. The court's sentence reflects the trust the defendant betrayed and the abuse he heaped upon his young victims. We will continue to work our hardest to punish and prevent crimes like these against our children."

"The crimes attributed to this defendant were horrendous, and I appreciate the teamwork that resulted in such a significant sentence," said Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum.

This case was investigated by the Office of the Attorney General, Child Predator Cybercrime Unit. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Stacie B. Harris.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum's Child Predator CyberCrime Unit is a member of the FBI Cyber Taskforce in Jacksonville and the North Florida Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, a federally funded program working nationwide to educate and support law enforcement to stop these crimes. More information on the Florida Attorney General's CyberCrime initiative is available at <http://www.myfloridalegal.com>.